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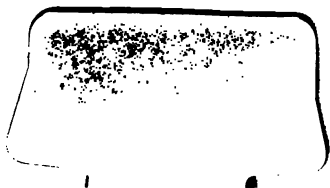
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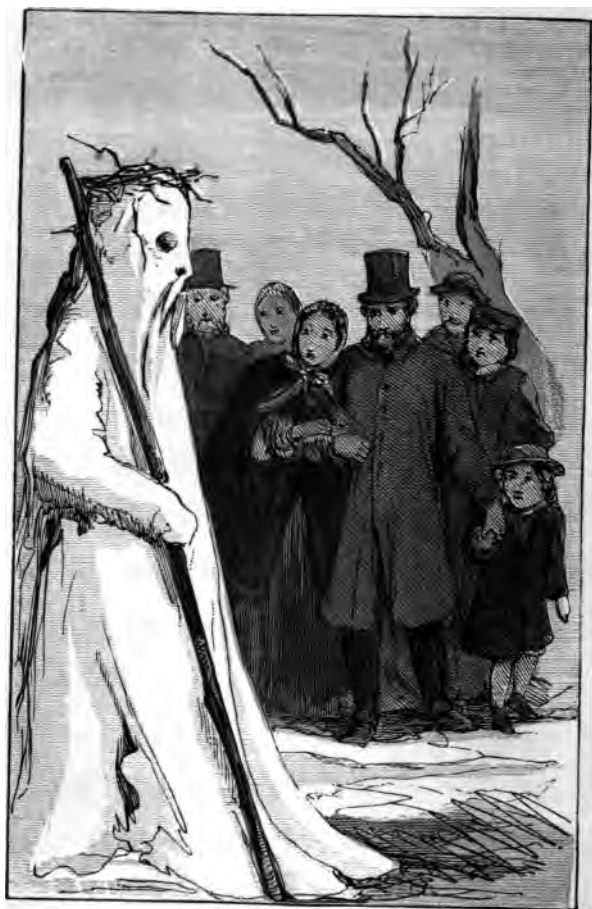
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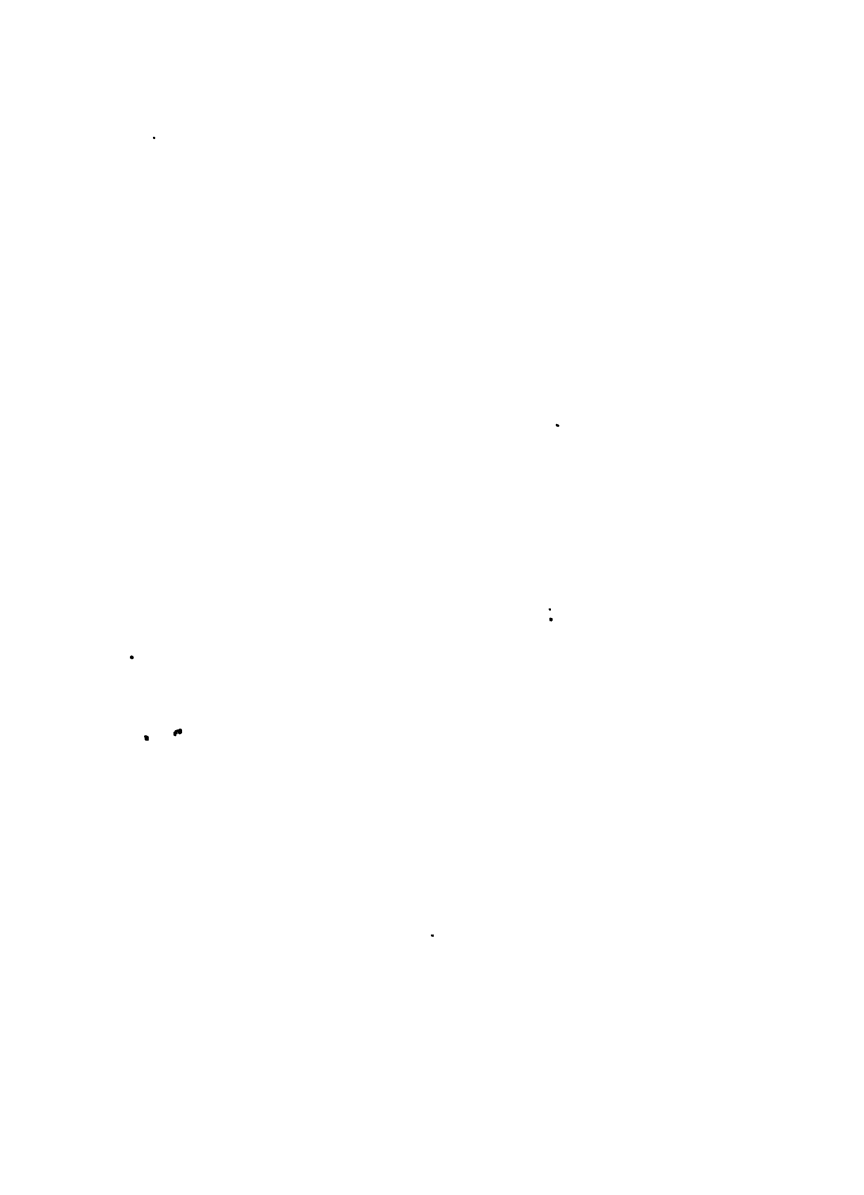




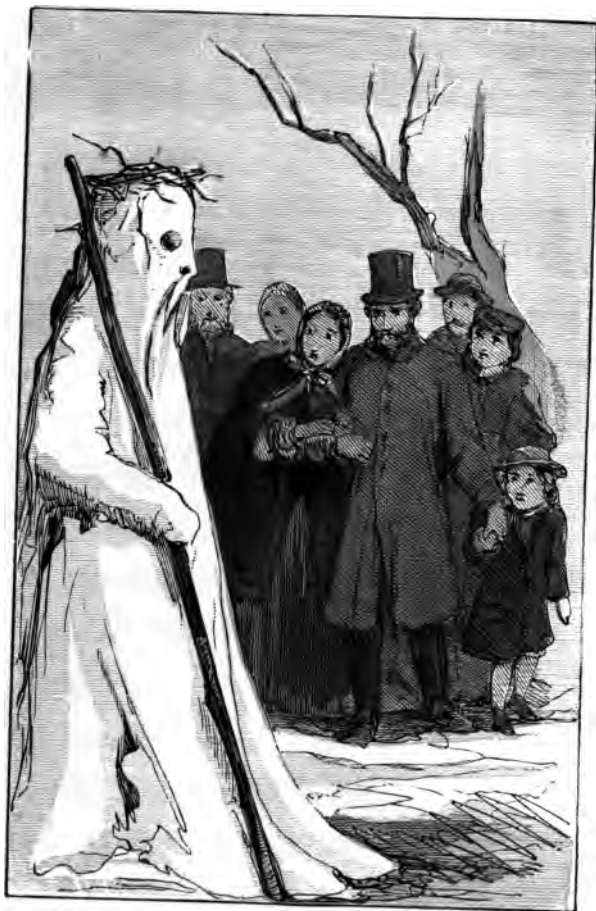




THE COLORADO SNOW MAN.

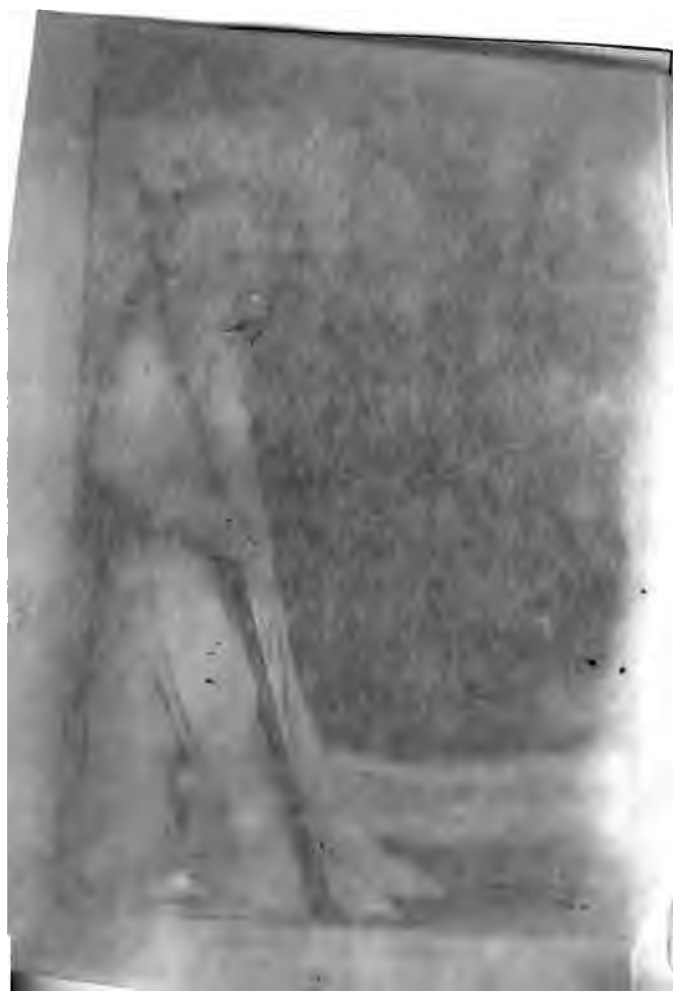






THE SNOW MAN.





THE MAN OF SNOW,  
AND OTHER TALES.

BY MRS. HARRIET MYRTLE,  
AUTHOR OF "THE PET LAMB," "LITTLE AMY'S BIRTHDAY,"  
ETC.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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**T**HE cottage door is no longer overhung with roses, clematis, and honeysuckle; the flowers in the garden are dead; there are no daisies in the fields; the trees are leafless; the robin that sang among the bright red berries of the mountain-ash now hops close to the window to ask for a crumb, and whistles his thanks perched on a bare bough.

*We have told how little Mary enjoyed*



the sweet Spring, the bright Summer, and the breezy Autumn; now we shall find how happy she was in the dreary Winter. In every change and at every time there are beautiful things for those who can see and feel them. Kind hearts can shed a warmth like sunshine, and deeds of love will bring gladness into every season.





# THE MAN OF SNOW, AND OTHER TALES.

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## WINTER PLEASURES.

---

**D**O jump up and look out at the trees, said Susan, one morning in December, to little Mary, "they are so beautiful, all sparkling like silver."

"It seems very cold," said Mary, rather sleepily. "Will you draw up the blind, Susan, that I may see out."

Susan drew up the blind. "Oh!" cried Mary, "how lovely the window

looks ! I see fairy palaces, and wreaths of flowers, and numbers of birds, and bright butterflies ! Oh ! and look at those angels, flying with white wings spread, and below them there is a lovely lake. Look, Susan, do you see what I mean ?”

“ I don’t see that so plain,” replied Susan ; “ but I see a pretty cottage just there, in the corner of this pane.”

“ Oh, yes !” said Mary ; “ and look, there is a high mountain behind it, and a forest of tall fir-trees growing all up the sides, and there is a river running along before it, with pretty flowers like stars on its banks. Oh ! and little fairies *dancing among* them ; now it all sparkles

like diamonds and rubies ! Beautiful, beautiful !” cried Mary, jumping out of bed. The sun had just risen, and his beams, tinged with red, shone on little Mary’s frosted window, and gave it this beautiful appearance.


“But it is much too cold to stand looking at it, dear,” said Susan ; “make haste, and let us get you down to the warm parlour fire.”

Splash went Mary into her bath, and made all the haste possible ; and while she was dressing, the window was a continual pleasure ; for as the sun shone on the glass, small portions of the frost-work melted away, and let the bright

rays shine through; and first these clear spots looked like little shining stars on the fairies' foreheads; then like stars in the sky; then they changed into pretty ponds in a wood; then into lakes with rocky banks; the angels seemed to fly farther away; the wreath of flowers took different forms; the fairies danced off with the birds and butterflies; and at last, just as the largest lake had become so large, that Mary thought it must be the sea, it was time to go down stairs.

The parlour looked so very comfortable and felt so warm. There was a bright fire; Bouncer was stretched on ~~the~~ rug; the kettle boiled on the hob;

breakfast was laid : the sun shone in at the lattice window. And now Mary, looking out into the garden, remembered what Susan had said about the trees, for they did indeed look beautiful. Every branch and every twig was encrusted over with crystals of white frost ; they no longer appeared like common trees ; no wood was to be seen ; they seemed to have been changed by some fairy in the night into silver, and sprinkled with diamonds. The laurels and other evergreens had all their leaves covered and fringed round the edges with the same silvery, sparkling frost-work. The ivy-leaves near the window looked the best

of all; their dark green colour seemed to make the jewels shine more brightly, and then their pretty forms were shown off by all this ornament. As Mary was fancying herself in some fairy palace, or in Aladdin's garden, and wondering whether there was any fruit made of precious stones hanging on the trees, her papa and mamma came down to breakfast, and they all enjoyed the sight together. Mary's pretty cousin, Chrissy, who had been May-Queen on the first of May, was on a visit at the cottage, and when she came down, she was delighted too with the beautiful sight, and thought the branches  *like white coral tipped with diamonds.*

While they were at breakfast, the fairy scene vanished; for as the warm sun shone on the frost-work, it melted away in drops of water.

“I could fancy the trees were crying,” said Mary, “because they are losing their bright jewels.”

Her mamma smiled, and told her to look at something new and bright that had come among the ivy-leaves. Mary looked out, and saw a row of shining icicles hanging down, where the dark, thick leaves kept off the heat of the sun; so that the water, as it melted, had frozen again before it had dropped on *the ground.*



And now Mary asked the question which she had asked for several mornings past. It was, "Do you think Aunt Mary, and Thomas, and Willie will come to-day?"

"I think it quite possible that they may," said her mamma; "but to-morrow is more likely."

"You had better try not to expect them till to-morrow, Mary," said Chrissy.

"I will *try*," said Mary, "but I think I do expect them to-day. And now let me think how many days it is before Christmas-eve will come. Yesterday we counted it was eleven days, so to-day it *is ten. Still ten days.*"

"But you know, Mary, we have plenty to do, first," said her mamma. Mary nodded and smiled.

Christmas-eve was the day they kept at the cottage; because Mary's papa and mamma always spent Christmas-day with grandmamma. She lived in a large old house, in a country town ten miles off. Everything in her house was clean and shining; the rooms smelt very sweet; and grandmamma was very kind, and let the children do whatever they liked; and her two maids were so good-natured and petted them; and there were always such nice cakes, oranges, and jellies. *Then, in the evenings, there was sure to*

be a magic lantern, or a man to play the fiddle; in short, going to grandmamma's was a very great pleasure.

Mary now asked her papa to come down to the pond, and give her another lesson in sliding. He came out, and as they ran along they found numbers of things to admire. Every blade of grass was fringed with the white frost-work, and the leaves of all the weeds that grew near the hedges looked quite pretty with their new trimming. But, above all, the mosses in the little wood that skirted the field were most lovely. When winter strips the trees of their leaves, then the *little, bright green mosses* come and

clothe the roots and stems, as if to do all they can to comfort them ; and to-day they were sparkling all over, and seemed to be dressed out for some festival. Mary and her papa stopped before a weeping birch-tree, with the green moss growing on its silvery white stem. After admiring it for some time, they looked up at its branches that hung drooping over their heads. “How light and feathery they look,” said Mary. “I think they are quite as pretty as in summer.”

“I think so, too,” said her papa. “I even think the birch more beautiful in winter than in summer ; and all the trees show us the grandeur and beauty

of their forms more when the leaves are gone. Look at their great sweeping branches."

"Yes," said Mary, "and then all the little twigs look so pretty, and like lace-work."

"And more than ever we must admire them," said her papa, "when we think that in every little bud at their tips lie the young leaves folded in, and safely shielded by this brown covering from the cold; but all ready to burst forth when the soft spring air and sunshine tell them it is time."

"Mary was delighted at this thought, *and they spent a little while looking at*

different buds, particularly those of the chestnut-trees, with their shining brown coats. Mary took great care not to break one off; she said, "It would be such a pity the little leaves should not feel the spring air, and come out in the sunshine."

"But, oh! Chrissy! what a lovely bunch of jewelled leaves you have collected," cried she. "Oh, yes, that branch in the middle will look pretty; it has managed to go on looking like coral, and to keep its diamonds, because it was so shaded. Now you will put the brown oak leaves, all shining. Here are some *more*; do put these; and then the pretty

little brown beech leaves glittering all over. It looks beautiful !”

“How pretty the form of the oak leaves is,” said Chrissy.

“Now let us take it in to mamma,” cried Mary.

“But, remember,” said Chrissy, “if we take it in, all its charm will vanish. Here in the frosty air it looks as if it had been dressed up by the fairies, but in the warm room we should soon have nothing but a bare twig and a few withered leaves.”

Mary looked rather sad.

“See,” said Chrissy, “let us fasten it to the top of your mamma’s *favourite seat* under the beech tree; it

will make a pretty ornament there.” And so it did, and was much admired; and shaded as it was, it kept its jewels on the whole day.

Now the sliding began. Mary’s papa took hold of her hand and ran with her along the field, till they came to the edge of the pond; then away they went, sliding side by side. He kept tight hold of her hand; for she could not help tumbling down very often, because this was only the second time she had tried. Once they very nearly both had a tumble, for Bouncer came out, and ran bounding and barking by their side, and rushed on the ice with them; but he suddenly




stopped short and barked, as if to say, "How is this ! what makes the water so hard this morning?" and when he stopped they nearly tumbled over him, but they managed to keep up. After sliding till Mary's face looked like a rosy-cheeked apple, it was time to go in to lessons ; and afterwards they took a walk, and saw some gentlemen and boys skating on the large pond on the common.

Among the people looking on were two little boys just come from India, that warm country. They had never seen frost, or snow, or ice, and they could not be persuaded to go upon the pond ; they thought they should cer-

tainly sink. At last a gentleman caught up the youngest in his arms and skated away with him, at which the poor little fellow began to cry. When his brother saw this, he hurried on the ice, keeping tight hold of his nurse's hand, and the gentleman came skating back with the little one and put him down, so now they both went on together.

Just as Mary's mamma said they must go home, the London coach with its four horses came gaily along the hard frosty road along the common. A boy on the top waved a red handkerchief, and Mary cried out, "That's Thomas, I know it is!" She was quite right, for



the coach stopped, and aunt Mary and Willie got out, while Thomas slid down from the roof. They were soon shaking hands, giving kisses and kind welcomes, and all walked merrily up the lane, and had a very happy dinner.

All the afternoon was spent in talking over everything that had happened to everybody since they parted; hearing Thomas's school adventures; visiting Cowslip and Primrose, the cow and her pretty young daughter; Chanticleer and Partlet, and all their children and relations; the pigeons and the goats; unpacking boxes, and looking at new books *or toys.*

Then came what Mary called "happy time." This was the time when it grew dark, candles were brought, shutters and curtains closed, and they all collected round the tea-table, while the fire blazed, the kettle boiled, and everything looked bright and pleasant. This evening it seemed happier than ever; and next morning it was delightful to awake and remember who had come to the cottage, and to see the party at breakfast; and then to have Thomas and Willie to slide on the pond. Mary grew quite a brave slider before they were called in to dinner.

*When dinner was over, she asked her*

mamma whether they should not go on with nice work this evening? and her mamma said, "Oh, yes, they must, or they should not be ready." This "nice work" was preparing a number of presents, which were to be given away at Christmas. None of their friends had been forgotten. Mary was busy hemming, knitting, dressing dolls, and making pincushions; her mamma was also hard at work, and besides, was often cutting out and fixing, and had a village girl, who came almost every day for work, making frocks and different things; Chrissy was also busy making all kinds *of pretty things.*

When Aunt Mary heard of it, she said, "We are all at work in the same way. Thomas has brought his turning lathe, and a few tools that he has, and he and Willie are very busy about something." Thomas put his finger on his lips to show her that she must not tell what that something was, and Willie put his arms round her neck, and whispered something very mysteriously.

"Chrissy and Mary have some secret too," said Mary's mamma; "they go into a room by themselves every day, and nobody must disturb them."

At this they both laughed.

"Well, we shall know about it all on

Christmas-eve," said Mary, "and then, besides, we shall see somebody, mamma says ; somebody that is coming here that we shall like very much, and that we know, and yet have never seen."

"Is it a gentleman or lady?" asked Thomas.

"A gentleman," said Mary, "I have guessed everybody I can think of, but I cannot find out."

"Somebody we know and yet have never seen," said Thomas ; "who can it be?"



## THE MAN OF SNOW.

**N**OW then, dear mamma, said Mary, “do tell us the story you promised us when we were out walking to-day, about the Man of Snow! I so long to hear about him.”

“But he was not a real man?” said Willie.

“No, to be sure not,” answered Mary’s mamma; “he was only a figure of snow, made in something like the shape of a man.”



“And could he walk?” said Willie.

“No, he had no proper legs. His broad legs were both joined together, and his arms lay flat to his broad sides.”

“Ha! ha! ha!” laughed Thomas; “he was rather a clumsy man.”

“But how did he come?” inquired Willie, very earnestly.

“How was the man made, mamma?” asked Mary. “Who made the figure?”

“I will tell you all about it,” said her mamma.

“Bouncer,” said Mary, “move a little farther on the rug, will you, so that I may sit at mamma’s feet, near Willie; *but when the story gets very interesting*

indeed, I shall be obliged to come and sit on mamma's knee, opposite to Willie."

"Now," said Willie; and Mary's mamma thus began:—

"When I was a little girl, about the age of Mary, we lived entirely in the country for several years, and one winter there was a great fall of snow. The snow covered the roof of the house, and the roofs of the stable and cow-house; and the branches of every tree were so thickly covered with the beautiful white snow, that sometimes in the morning, when I was being dressed, and looked out of the window, I could at first have fancied the trees were all apple and pear-

trees full of blossoms. You may, therefore, suppose that the snow lay very deep in the fields.

“We had three fields; one was adjoining our kitchen-garden; and there was often a cow, horse, or pony allowed to walk about in it when the grass was good. This field sloped down into a second, which was parted off by a gate; and then, by a pathway along the side of a high hedge, we came to a stile, and on the other side of the stile was our largest field. No cattle were allowed to enter this field, as it was kept entirely for grass to make hay with. Here, then, the deep *snow lay, all broad and white, and soft,*

and without the marks of a single foot-step all over the whole bright expanse, where all was whiteness and silence, and where nothing was moving.

“Now, there lived in a pretty lane very near us an old parish-clerk, named Downes. He lived in his cottage alone, excepting his little granddaughter and a blackbird. He was a tall, thin old man, with straight white hair ; very kind to all the children, but had a long face, and was very serious. His name was Godfrid, but we always called him Gaffer Downes.

“One morning, during this great snow time, Mr. Gaffer Downes came to my father, and asked permission to make

something curious in his large field. He explained what it was, and had leave given him directly; for everybody was fond of Gaffer Downes. He had been parish-clerk in our village nearly forty years.

“ Away went Mr. Downes to get assistants for what he wished to do, and he soon found two who were willing to help him. One was the coachman of Squire Turner’s family, who were neighbours and friends of ours ; and the other was the parish sexton and cow-doctor. It was a particular part of the sexton’s duty to keep all the tombstones clear of weeds with his spade, and also to attend  
to the ivy that grew up the church walls,

just to prevent it from covering up the windows. He brought his spade with him; and the three went trudging off together through the snow.

“ They took their way down into our great field, and there they each made a snow-ball. Following the directions of Gaffer Downes, these snow-balls were rolled along until they collected more and more snow upon their sides, all round, and of course began to get very large. Each man’s snow-ball was soon as large as his head. They went rolling on, and soon each of the snow-balls was as large as two heads; then as large as a cow’s head; then as large as a very great

cow's head ; and then each man was obliged to stop, as he could roll his snow-ball along no more, it was so large and heavy."

" Oh ! how I should have liked to have been there to help," cried Thomas.

" Mr. Downes then told the coachman and the sexton to leave their snow-balls and come and help him to roll his. So all three pushed away, and rolled it nearly all round the great field, by which time it was as large as the head of an elephant. They stopped to rest and take breath. They were all very warm, and the sexton was so hot, he was *obliged to take off* his coat as he had

underneath it an old red waistcoat, of thick cloth, with sleeves made out of a pair of worsted stockings with the feet cut off. Mr. Downes now informed them that he wished this large ball to be rolled to the middle of the field, and to remain there while they rolled the others to the same size, and then brought them to the same spot. They were just beginning their work again, when they heard a loud merry laugh at the other side of the hedge, and who should they see looking over, and showing his white teeth, and making a funny face at them, but George Poole, the black footman at Squire Turner's.



“ ‘Aha!’ said George, ‘aha, Massa Down, me see you! how you do, Massa Gaffer Down? and how you do, you lilly pretty granddaughter at home? and how you do, you blackbird, Massa Down? aha! very fond of blacky bird, he just my colour. How you do, you cold finger, Massa Gaffer Down, and Massa sexton and coachyman too, with cold fingers, all so red, like scraped carrot.’ ”

“ ‘George Poole,’ said Mr. Downes, with a serious look, ‘George Poole, you interrupt, come and assist us, or return home to your fire in a quiet and proper manner, I beg of you.’ ”

“ ‘*Me* go home to proper fire,’ an-

swered George, ‘but what you make there with great big snow-ball, Massa Down?’”

“‘I do not intend to let any one know at present,’ answered Mr. Downes; ‘good day, George;’ and as he said this, he made a sign to the coachman and sexton, and they continued their work of rolling.

“‘Me come and see him when him finished,’ said George, ‘good day, Massa Down;’ and as he said this, the laughing black face of George Poole disappeared from the top of the hedge.”

“What made George Poole speak so funnily?” asked Willie.—“He was not an *Englishman*, but a negro,” answered

Mary's mamma. "The negroes have a language of their own, and seldom learn to speak English quite rightly

"This work of rolling continued all the morning, and as they found they had nothing else to do, they worked at it all the afternoon also. By this time they had made seven balls of snow, each as large as the head of an elephant, and had rolled them all into the very middle of the field. But to do this, they had been obliged to ask for the help of two men from our house. This my father readily gave; indeed, I believe he himself helped at the last rolling of each ball, as they *were so very heavy*, and moved so slowly.

Mr. Downes then took the spade and patted every ball with the flat part of it, in order to make them even and hard, and so left them for the night.

“The next morning, while we were at breakfast, Gaffer Downes passed by the window with a spade over his shoulder, followed by the sexton and the coachman, each with a spade over his shoulder; and after them came the beadle, the church bell-ringer, and the young man who blew the bellows for the organ. They all followed Mr. Downes into the large field.

“Up we all jumped from the breakfast-table, and hurried on our things; *papa*, and *mamma*, and I and Ellen

Turner, who had heard of something that was to be done in our field, and had come over to breakfast with us to see. Away we all went, mamma, carrying me where the snow was too deep, and papa carrying Ellen Turner.

“When we came into the large field, there we saw them all very busy indeed, working under the directions of Gaffer Downes, who was not working himself now, but standing still in the attitude of an artist giving orders to his pupils. They soon made a sort of flat bank of snow, about a foot and a half high, and patted it down very hard with their *spades*. The ‘pupils,’ that is to say the

.

coachman, and sexton, and bell-ringer, and beadle, and the young man who blew the bellows for the organ, then rolled three of the great balls of snow up on this bank close to each other, so as to form a sort of circle, but leaving a hollow place in the middle, of the form of a triangle, which the beadle remarked was very much the figure of the coachman's Sunday hat. Mr. Downes now came with his spade and made this three-cornered hollow larger, in fact large enough for a man to stand in very easily. He then desired the coachman and sexton to assist him with their *spades* in making the tops of these three

balls quite flat. When this was done, he directed them to make three more of the balls flat at top and bottom. This also being done, he called all his party together, and told them to lift these last three balls, one at a time, and carefully place them upon the top of those three that were already placed, as I have told you. So the pupils did as they were directed, and then Mr. Downes made three notches like steps in the side of two of the balls, and up them he slowly walked with his spade, and again made the three-cornered hole in the middle of the three top snow-balls, as large as he *had made it in those at the bottom.* We

all thought he was going to get into it, but he did not, he only looked in.

“ He now came down with a very important look, and went up to the one large ball of snow, which still lay there in its round shape. This he trimmed and patted all about into the form he wished, and then all the pupils were called to carry it, and lift it by degrees to place at the very top, where it was intended to be made the head of a Man of Snow. It was a great job to get the head safely up, it was so very heavy. However, after much time, and many narrow escapes of the head and all the *pupils tumbling down together, they did*



manage to get it up to the top, just over the hole, which it covered up, and its own weight kept it there safely. It was now time to go to dinner. We all went, but we finished as soon as we could, and returned to the large field. Gaffer Downes, the coachman, and sexton, moved round and round with their spades, cutting and shaving, or patting up the snow to make the figure of the Man. And as there were several hollow places where you could look into the inside, they filled them up with hard lumps of snow, all except one hole, which Mr. Downes said he wished left *open to let in air*, though, on second

thoughts, he said he would cover it over himself, and so he did, but very lightly. They made a few trenches and ridges down the middle and at the sides of the Man, and this they called his legs and arms, at which we all laughed. Lastly, Mr. Downes went climbing up the sides with his spade, and went to work at the head. What he tried to do was to make a face to it, but it was very difficult. He cut out the nose and chin very large and broad ; but some unlucky cut, just as he was finishing, made them fall off. He then asked the beadle to bring him two short sticks from the hedge ; this being *done, he stuck them into the face, and*

covered them over with handfuls of snow, which he pressed and patted into the shape of a nose and a chin. But when he had finished, the weight of the snow made the sticks come out, and down they fell. He went on trying again and again, and we all looked on and hoped he would succeed, though we laughed very much also, for the nose fell off six times, and the chin four. At last, however, with a sudden thought, which could only have occurred to one who had quite a genius for making a Man of Snow—Mr. Downes stuck the two short sticks in, not pointing downwards or straight out, but pointing

rather upwards, so that the weight of the nose and chin were supported upon the face, and then held fast. And a very strange face it was !

“Two things were still to be done. Mr. Downes drew from his coat pocket a couple of large round stones, of a blue grey colour, and these he fixed in the face for the eyes ; and over the head, and at each side, he stuck a number of small hedge twigs, and a wreath from a thorny wild rose-tree, for hair. If more snow should fall, he assured us the hair would look quite beautiful.”

“I hope some snow *would* fall,” said Mary.

“Down came Mr. Gaffer Downes, looking so seriously and modestly upon the snow-clumps on his shoes, while we all praised his work, and told him how much we liked his Man of Snow. It was now evening; we all went back through the fields, and when we arrived at the house, my papa sent out a quantity of hot ale with sugar and toast in it for the pupils, and we made Mr. Downes come in to tea with us, though he wanted to go home, as he said his little granddaughter and the blackbird would think he was lost in the snow.

“There did happen to be a light fall of snow again in the night, and we all

went down to the large field next morning after breakfast to see what change it had made in the appearance of the great Man. And a fine change indeed it had made. He looked much larger, and rounder, and whiter, and colder, and seemed more 'at home' in the great white field. And he had a wonderful head of hair!"

"But," said Thomas, "one thing I do not understand; why did Mr. Downes make the Man of Snow hollow inside like the trunk of a hollow tree? It could not be for air. What need was there for any air?"

"And why," asked Mary, "did he

leave a great hole open, or very lightly covered at one side? was that for air too?"

"Did the negro blacky, George Poole, come and see the 'Man of Snow' when he was finished?" asked Willie.

"You will know, or guess all in time," answered Mary's mamma. "And now, Mary, come and sit upon my knee, for the most interesting part of the story is coming."

Up jumped Mary, and gave Willie a kiss, who was on the opposite knee; her mamma thus continued—

"The very same evening as we were *all sitting* round the fire about half an

hour before supper-time, Mr. Downes came to our house, and sent in word that he had something very important to say. Mamma said, 'Pray tell Mr. Downes to come in directly.' In came Gaffer Downes, looking rather paler than usual, and with his face looking longer than usual, and his white hair looking straighter than usual, and his chin sticking out with some frost upon it. He remained standing in the middle of the room without saying a word.

" 'What is the matter, Mr. Downes?' said papa.

" 'Sir,' said Mr. Downes, without moving from the place where he stood, 'some-



thing has happened.’—‘What has happened?’ said papa, rising from his chair.

“‘An event!’ answered Mr. Downes.

“‘What event?’ said mamma, rising from her chair; ‘and where has it happened?’—‘In the large field,’ answered Mr. Gaffer Downes. ‘An event has happened to the “Man of Snow!”’

“At this we all ran up to Gaffer Downes, exclaiming, ‘What has happened to him—tell us at once.’”

“Oh! I hope the Man of Snow had not tumbled down,” cried Mary.—“You shall hear,” said her mamma.

“‘The Man,’ said Mr. Downes in a *low voice*—‘the Man talks.’

“ ‘ Talks ! ’ cried we all.

“ ‘ Yes,’ said he, ‘ the Man speaks. He was addressing the field in a long speech when I passed on the other side of the hedge. It is a fine moonlight night, you can all come and hear him yourselves.’

“ ‘ That we will,’ exclaimed my papa, ‘ we will all go directly.’

“ So mamma called for bonnets, and shawls, and handkerchiefs, and cloaks, and muffs, and tippetts, and gloves, and fur boots, and all sorts of things, for there were several young ladies staying on a visit with us. And outside the door we found Squire Turner’s coachman, with the sexton and beadle,

and bell-ringer, and the young man who blew the bellows for the organ ; in fact all Gaffer Downes' 'pupils' waiting to go with us into the large field.

“ Off we all set, Mr. Downes leading the way. At the end of the first field, he made us all stop to listen. He asked us if any of us could hear the ‘ Man of Snow ’ speaking. We all listened, and at last said ‘ No.’ He then told us to follow him slowly along by the hedge of the second field, listening all the way. We heard nothing ; and again Mr. Downes stopped us all at the stile leading into the great field. Very attentively we listened ; *but all was as silent as possible.*

“Mr. Downes now told us we had better wait a little, and let him go first, and as soon as the Man of Snow spoke he would return and tell us to come softly. So over the stile got Mr. Downes, and we soon lost sight of him, as he went creeping round close by the hedge.

“Well, we waited and waited, but Mr. Downes did not return. We listened; but we could hear nothing. Still we waited; but at last papa got out of patience, and said, ‘What can have become of Mr. Downes?’ ‘I hope,’ said mamma, ‘nothing has happened to him.’ ‘I am determined,’ said papa, ‘to go

and see after him.'—'Let us all go together,' said mamma. 'Let us all go together straight up towards the Man of Snow, and ask after Mr. Downes?'

"It was agreed upon, and we all got over the stile, and went crowding together along the field, nobody liking to go first, but all keeping close like sheep when they do not know what to do for the best.

"At last we came near the great Man of Snow. Papa, and the young man who blew the bellows for the organ, stood in front; and next to them the sexton; and then mamma with all us *girls clinging* close round her, wrapped

up in our cloaks, with only our eyes and noses to be seen; and behind us stood the rest of the pupils; and behind all, at some distance, stood the beadle.

“ Well, there we all stood in silence, in the great silent snow field, looking at the great silent Man of Snow, with the moon shining upon his head!

“ The young man who blew the bellows for the organ was the first who spoke; and he said in a very respectful voice, ‘ I ask your pardon, sir—but *could* you be so kind as to tell us what has become of Mr. Downes?’

“ No answer was returned. *Everything was as silent as before.*

“The sexton now spoke; and in a very humble tone he said, ‘May it please your Majesty!—we have lost the clerk of the parish!’

“Again we all remained in the same suspense and silence. The moon now went partly behind a cloud, so that only a little pale light came across one side of the head and shoulders of the Man of Snow. At last papa was obliged to speak, and he said,—

“Oh, Man of Snow! we come not to disturb thy tranquillity; but if thy gracious Whiteness hath once already spoken to these fields, permit us also to *hear thy solemn voice!*’

“There was again a pause, and then—would you believe it?—you hardly can—would you believe it—the Man of Snow answered! He did indeed; in a very slow and solemn voice he said,—

“‘Peace be upon ye all—and the silent thoughtfulness of these white fields.’ You may suppose how fearful and astonished, and quiet we all stood, at hearing these words. Presently, however, my papa took courage, and again addressed the Man of Snow.

“‘Who art thou—and whence comest thou, oh, most serene Highness of the Frost?’

“‘*I am a spirit of Winter!*’ answered



the Man of Snow, in the same solemn tone. ‘Once I was alive, and had a large body. In Lapland I was one of the most renowned giants. There my image is built up with white stone. And because this likeness of me has here been made, therefore on the wings of the wind hath my spirit crossed the bleak seas, to dwell for a little time in this body of snow. But now depart!—I would be alone!—Retire!—To-morrow, at moon-rise ye may come again.’

“We did not dare to disobey this command to depart, you may be sure; so we all went homewards, too full of *thoughts to speak.*

“Just as we had reached the stile, one of the young ladies cried out ‘Oh, what’s that under the hedge?’ We all looked, and there we saw the head of a man rising out of the dry ditch by the side of the hedge! Who do you think it was? it was the poor beadle! he had been so frightened when the Man of Snow spoke, that he had run back, but being unable to get over the stile in his confusion, he got into the dry ditch, and sat there upon the dead leaves and snow, with his chin just level with the top of the bank. However, the pupils soon lifted him out, and comforted him, and took him home. They also went to the

cottage of Gaffer Downes, to know if he had returned safely. But he had not.

“Before we went to supper, however, we sent to the cottage, as we were getting very anxious; and his granddaughter answered from the window, that her dear grandfather had returned, and had a basin of warm broth, and was now in bed.

“We could hardly eat our supper, any of us, for talking of the Man of Snow, and what he had said about having been once upon a time a Lapland giant! For my part, I could not sleep for thinking of it; and all the young ladies said the same the next morning at breakfast.

“*You may be sure we were all very*

anxious for the evening to come, when we were again to go and hear what the Man of Snow had to say. He told us, you recollect, to come again at moon-rise; and the moon, papa said, would rise about seven o'clock.

“ We had a dinner-party at our house, and nearly all the time we talked of little else except the Man of Snow, or rather what he had done when he was a giant in Lapland; and we thought that perhaps he might tell us the history of his life. We determined, every one of us, to go all together down to the great field, when the moon rose.

“ As the time approached we became

so anxious that we got ready too soon, and then as we were all ready, we thought we might just as well go, and wait there till the white giant chose to speak.

“So off we all set, and went very merrily, and yet not without some little fears, down towards the large field.

“But when we had all got over the stile, who should come running and calling after us, but Mr. Downes. He was quite out of breath; but as soon as he could speak, he said, ‘Indeed you are too soon! It is too soon by half an hour! You had much better get over the stile again, and go into the other *field a little while!*’

“Now this made some of us laugh; for, do you know, we *now* began to suspect that it was Mr. Downes himself who had spoken for the Man of Snow.”—“Do you know, mamma,” whispered Mary, “that is just what I have been thinking too.”—“Yes to be sure,” said Thomas, “and that was why he left the hollow place and the hole.”


“What! did he get inside the Man of Snow and speak?” said Willie.  
“But go on, mamma,” cried Mary.

“We thought perhaps he had got behind somewhere, or perhaps into the inside of the great figure, and thus spoken for him. But now as we had come too

soon, he had no time to get ready. We were sorry for poor Gaffer Downes, yet still we could not help laughing at the scrape he was in. He went on assuring us the Man of Snow would not speak at all, as we had come before the time he ordered. But this made us laugh the more, as we were now almost sure how it had been contrived.

“Meantime we had slowly advanced towards the Man of Snow; poor Mr. Downes telling us all the time that the man would be sure not to utter a word, as we had disobeyed his directions.

“ ‘ But see !’ said papa, ‘ the moon is *now rising !*’



“ ‘ Ah, ’tis no matter now ;’ answered Mr. Downes, in a melancholy tone. ‘ The Man of Snow will not speak a single word.’ ”

“ Mr. Downes had scarcely said this, when a voice from the Man of Snow called out in a loud tone—

“ ‘ How you do, Massa Down !—how you lilly granddaughter do—and how you do you blackbird, Massa Gaffer Down ?’ ”

“ We instantly all burst into a fit of laughter.”

It was some time before the story could go on, for Mary laughed so much, that she jumped down off her mamma’s knee. Thomas laughed still louder, and



Willie kept saying, "But how was it?"

At last they were able to listen again.

"All laughed very much," continued Mary's mamma, "except poor Mr. Downes, who walked backwards and forwards once or twice, saying, 'Dear me! how very vexatious!'"

"Papa and mamma now both went up to Mr. Downes, and told him they saw how vexed he was at the change that had somehow or other taken place in the voice of the Man of Snow, because the spirit of the Lapland giant had certainly flown away, and quite a different one had got into its place. However, *they begged* him not to take it to heart,

but to go and speak to the Man of Snow, and ask him to explain a little.

“MR. DOWNES thought for a minute, and then seeming to make up his mind to it, walked a few paces nearer to the Man of Snow, and this curious dialogue took place between them :—

“MR. DOWNES. ‘Who art thou, oh, rude familiar voice, who hast usurped the place of the frosty Spirit of last night?’

“MAN OF SNOW. ‘Me the King of Lapland!—speaky more respectful to him Snow-ball Majesty, Massa Down!’

“MR. DOWNES. ‘No Majesty of Snow hast thou, nor art thou Lapland’s king; nor ever wert, nor shalt be.’

“MAN OF SNOW. ‘Why you say so, you Massa Gaffer man! Me come from own country Lapland late last night, after supper.’

“MR. DOWNES. ‘What then for supper did the King of Lapland eat?’

“MAN OF SNOW. ‘Berry good supper to be sure—great supper in great big palace, surrounded with orange trees, and plantain, and banana trees. Me have curried chicken plenty, and hot rice, with treacle, and a pine-apple, and water-melon from own gardens close by; and then me have chocolate, berry sweet, and great big cigar to smoke! What you tink now, Massa Down?’

“MR. DOWNES. ‘I think the King of Lapland dreams.’

“MAN OF SNOW. ‘What he dream of, then?’

“MR. DOWNES. ‘He dreams that he had supper in some West Indian isle; for in Lapland no oranges, no pines, no melons grow, no plantain, no banana.’

“MAN OF SNOW. ‘Me never say they did grow there.’

“When the Man of Snow said this, we all of us together cried out, ‘Oh! oh!’ meaning, what a story he was telling.


“MAN OF SNOW. ‘Me never mean to say so. Me have great big hot-house, all glass, where fruit grow; and other

ting me have brought over in fine large ship. Me very rich king; hab everything me wish.'

"MR. DOWNES. 'Rich, dost thou say! in money or in land?'

"MAN OF SNOW. 'In money to be sure. Me have large chest full of dollars—Lapland dollars; and guineas too—my friend and brother, King of England, send me; and me have plenty land too. Large fields of rice—no, not rice—rice not grow in Lapland—me know dat very well—me mean to say, large plantation of sugar-cane.'

"MR. DOWNES. 'Nor doth the sugar-cane in Lapland grow.'



“MAN OF SNOW. ‘ Me know that very well—me just going to say so. But me *try* to make him grow ; me try to bring new tings into my country ; me try to get horses, and oxen, and sheep, and deer, and dogs, and nanny goats, into my kingdom, and send away bull-frogs, and rattle snakes. Me want to change scorpions and mosquitoes into butterflies and lady-birds. Me want to have all manner fine houses for fine birds—parrots, and maccaws, with green wings, and scarlet tails, and blue breasts, and top-knots ; and peacocks, and birds of paradise, and a great pond for gold and silver fishes. And me mean to build

great big bamboo houses for all these, twice as high as my head.'

"As the Man of Snow said this, we all saw his head shake a little, as if he was in a great fuss with what he was thinking of doing; and we even thought we saw the upper part of the figure shake a little, and some pieces of snow begin to crumble and fall. But he went on speaking again.

"MAN OF SNOW. 'And me mean to have elephants, and rhinoceroses, and apes, with long arms and blue noses. And me mean to build a house for elephants, very large and very strong; *so that* when we catch wild elephant he

no can get out. He try and try—but he can't.'—Here we all saw the Man of Snow shake again.

“MAN OF SNOW. ‘Makey house all sides very strong bamboo. See him angry trunk poke through the bars of cage—but all too fast and strong. He no *can* get out. Then he make trumpet noise with trunk, and him lilly cunning eye look so very angry; and then he run him head right against the front of cage to try and push him down! but it all too strong and he can't!—yet he push!—and push!—and trumpet with trunk—and scream—and push! and oh, Massa Down!——’



“As the Man of Snow uttered these words, off rolled his head, and broke into twenty pieces!—and the next instant the whole figure cracked, and opened in the middle, and fell to pieces—and out rolled the black man, George Poole, upon the snow, crying out, ‘Oh, Massa Down, why you no build him stronger?’

“You may suppose how we all laughed. One of the young ladies almost went into a fit with laughing, and most of us laughed till we had a pain at both sides of the face, and yet we were unable to stop. Even Mr. *Downes* laughed; not at first, though, *at first he made a very long face; then*

he began '*te! he! he!*'—and '*he! he! he!*' till at last he went into '*ha! ha! ha! oh, dear me!*'—and was obliged to sit down upon the snow and wipe his forehead to recover himself.

“We all returned to the house very merrily, laughing all the way. We brought the King of Lapland with us, for George had always been a favourite in the village; so we told the cook to give his Majesty a large basin of rice, milk, and sugar, and mamma sent him afterwards a large slice of plum cake, and a tumbler with port wine and lemon, to make negus. Papa requested Mr. Downes to come in to supper with us, *but he said that he really must go home,*

as his granddaughter and the blackbird would think something had happened to him. Papa, however, would take no denial, so we made Mr. Downes come in, and then we sent a man for his granddaughter, with a message that she was to bring the blackbird with her.

“ So, in a few minutes afterwards, in came a pretty little girl of ten years of age, with blue eyes and flaxen hair, and a complexion like a rose, bringing in her hand a large milk-white wicker cage, with the blackbird sitting in the middle. He was as black as a coal, with a yellow bill, and, oh ! such a bright black eye.

*He sat on his perch, with his head bent on one side a little while, then he jumped*

down to the bottom of the cage, and poking his head out between the bars, gave a good look all round. He then hopped back into the middle of his cage, bowed very low, and very quickly, several times, and then hopped upon his perch, with his tail towards us, but instantly whisked round, as if he was afraid somebody was going to touch his tail. Then he began to sing; he sang nearly all supper-time, and flapped his black wings, while we all stood up and drank the health of Mr. Gaffer Downes, the artist who had made the Man of Snow."

"The *only* thing I wish," said little Mary, "is that George Poole had not *broken the Man of Snow.*"

“You see,” said Thomas, “he jumped about, and pushed with his head like the elephant, and that was the reason of the misfortune.”

“If I had been there,” said Willie, “I should have called out as *loud* as I could—‘Take care, negro blacky George Poole, and don’t push so hard!’”

“Well, at any rate,” said Mary, “he would have melted when it grew warmer; but still, I wish the great silent Man of Snow had not been broken to pieces. He must have looked so grand, standing in the great silent snow field, with the moon shining on his head.”

“*I like* that funny George Poole so *much!*” cried Willie.

“So do I,” said Thomas.

“Yes, and so do I, too,” cried Mary; “he even made that grave Gaffer Downes laugh. But I like the blackbird so much, hopping about and bowing; I know exactly how he went on. And then the little granddaughter; what was her name, mamma?”

“Her name,” answered her mamma, “was little Susie Downes. But now it is bed-time.”

So they all went to bed, and little Mary dreamed all night of the Man of Snow, and of the moonlight resting on his head and his silvery white hair.



## CHRISTMAS-EVE AT THE COTTAGE.



**T**HE ten days that Mary thought of as so long, had passed quickly away and Christmas-eve was come. Two happy days came together—to-day at home, to-morrow at grand-mamma's; and, besides, Susan, who was to stay at home, was to have a Christmas party, and her father and mother were coming from London to see her.

*It was about two hours after break-*

fast; the parlour was all put in order as for a holiday; there were no lessons nor work about; the fire burned brightly with a large log upon it; a tall glass stood on the table, filled with holly-branches, with splendid red berries, and mistletoe. Susan had stuck sprigs of holly in the kitchen window; she was very busy, assisted by the village girl who had helped to work, preparing dinner for to-day and to-morrow; and besides, making several plum-puddings, and getting ready dishes of beef, laid on potatoes, to be sent to the baker's in the morning for Christmas dinners for some of their neighbours. Mary's mamma



said she liked them all to have a good dinner on that day.

The spare room was put ready for the gentleman that was expected. Who could he be? They had never guessed. Mary, with Chrissy's assistance, had put into her papa's study all the presents which were to be given away to-day; no one was to go in there till twelve o'clock.

Now came Mary's mamma and papa, and aunt Mary into the parlour. Then Chrissy came; they all sat down by the fire and began to talk, but soon there was a silence. It was certain that they *were* expecting somebody; the children

became quiet too, and listened. It was not long before a ring came at the gate, and Susan was heard showing some one in. Mary's papa and mamma went quickly to the door and brought in a gentleman. They seemed very glad to see him, and he looked so happy and so did aunt Mary and Chrissy. He said quickly, "Is this little Mary?" she held out her hand to him, but looked grave, for she thought to herself, "I do *not* know him;" then he shook hands with the boys and said, "So these are Thomas and Willie." They too thought to themselves, "We do *not* know him." But he looked very good-natured, and they

thought, "We should *like* to know him."

A man now came to the door with a portmanteau and carpet bag, which were carried up to the gentleman's room; and then he took off his great coat and sat down, and drew Mary towards him and said to her mamma, "How this dear child reminds me of you when we used to play so many games together, and run over that bright green meadow." Then he seated Mary on his knee, and asked her "if she had got a kite?"

"It's James White! it's James White!" cried Mary, clapping her *hands*.

“Master James White,” exclaimed Thomas—“turned into a gentleman,” added little Willie.—“That it is,” cried he, laughing heartily; and in a minute Mary was mounted on one shoulder, Willie on the other, Thomas had hold of his hand, and all four were dear friends directly.

“He is Mr. White now,” said Thomas. This made everybody laugh.

“And do you remember making that large new kite?” said Mary. “On scientific principles,” added her mamma. “And flying it,” said Thomas, “when it pulled you all three down the meadow slope?”—“And stuck in a tree,” said

Willie.—“Yes, and knocked down five little rooks among the apples and gingerbread,” said James White.

At these words, which showed that he was the real maker and flyer of the kite, fresh bursts of joy and laughter began. When quiet was a little restored, James White had some refreshments after his journey, and there was much talk about old times, and about distant countries into which he had travelled, but presently the clock struck twelve.

The sound reminded the children of the room full of presents; and it was a great pleasure to hear Mary's mamma *ask their* new friend to come into the

next room with all of them. Chrissy went first and threw open the door, and they went in. Mary kept fast hold of her mamma's hand, and then ran to her papa and led him to his writing table. "What kind fairy has made me this pretty shaded green rug for my ink-stand?" said he. "That kind fairy was mamma," said Mary. "And who has given me this new blotting book, with a beautiful landscape painted on each cover? ah, Chrissy! I think this must be your doing."—"Yes, and is it not lovely?" said Mary.

"And here I have found a very pretty bronze taper," said he.—"Aunt Mary

gave you that," said Mary ; " and don't you like those pretty matches, all twisted up of different coloured paper ? Dear little Willie made them."

"Dear little fellow," said her papa, stroking Willie's curly hair ; " and here I think I have found some of Thomas's work ?"—"Yes," said Mary, "he made that nice little box with his turning-lathe ; it is to hold your wafers."

"And who made this pretty pen-wiper ? and who hemmed this nice white silk handkerchief, with this bright blue border ?" Mary answered by jumping up round his neck, and giving him a kiss.

"*How* glad I am to see your neat

work, my dear little girl," said he.  
"Thank you, and thank you all."

"Now, Aunt Mary dear, open that work-basket, it is for you," said little Mary. She opened it; everything was complete in it. Mamma had chosen the basket; Chrissy had lined it with rose-coloured silk, and made the needle-book; Mary had made the pincushion; papa had provided the scissors and thimble; Thomas had turned a neat box to hold reels of cotton; Willie had made a pretty little green silk bag, with violet strings, "to hold buttons or anything mamma liked." His mamma was quite delighted with her presents.



Beside the work-basket, there lay on the table a small sealed packet, directed "For the stranger we expect to-day." "Mr. White, James White! that we knew and yet had never seen, this is for you," cried Mary. He broke the seals, and found a purse of dark blue silk, thickly mixed with little steel beads. "Oh! what kind hearts I have come back to," he cried; "thank you all, and particularly the maker of this beautiful purse."

"It was Chrissy that made it," said Mary.—"And I think she is a very kind Chrissy then," said he.

*"Now look under the table, Thomas,"*

cried Chrissy. Thomas looked down, and saw a box, on the lid of which his own name was written, with the words, "A present from all." He raised the lid. Oh! what a happy boy he was! It was a box of carpenter's tools; everything he had wished for so long was there—hammer, saw, planes, chisels, bradawls, gimlets, screwdrivers, nails, screws, and tacks. He had made nice things before, with the few tools he had, but now, how he should work! "Oh! thank you, thank you all!" he cried, springing up, and running from one to the other. Willie and Mary began to dance together for joy, at seeing him so

happy ; and as they danced Mary led Willie up to an arm-chair by the fire, and told him to look behind it. He went down on his knees, and crawled behind the chair. Presently out he came dragging by a string a carrier's horse and cart, on the back of which was written "Willie, Carrier." Willie immediately called out, "Wo, Meg !" which made everybody laugh, for he said it so like John, the carrier.

"Papa chose this very horse because it was so like Meg, and had a white face ; and look, Willie ! these little baskets are hampers ; Chrissy painted them brown *to look like hampers ; you can pack them*

as you like, they *will* open; and you must pretend these white sacks are full of flour: it's sand you know, but you must pretend."

"Did *you* make them?" said Willie.  
"Yes," answered Mary; "and Thomas made the wooden boxes, and they will open too, and you can nail them up with little tacks."—"And cord them with string," said Thomas.

"So I can," cried Willie, looking into one of the boxes, "and put all sorts of things in them."—"And do you see John, the carrier, sitting in front? Aunt Mary dressed him, is he not like? Chrissy painted his red face," said Mary.—"And

Mary knit him this blue comforter, exactly like the one she knit for the real John, the carrier ;” said Chrissy. “ It’s lying on the table there ; you see they are exactly alike.”

“ But there is written on the cart, ‘ Willie, carrier,’ ” said Willie, looking grave.

“ So there is,” said, Mary, “ what shall we do ? we never thought of that.”

“ We must get Chrissy to alter it,” said Thomas, “ she can paint John *and* Willie, carriers.”

This seemed to satisfy them all, and Willie, after making Meg trot round the *room*, declared that he liked his cart very

much indeed, clapped his hands, gave a shout, and then jumped up into his mamma's arms. "Now Mary is to shut her eyes," he cried.

"Yes," cried Thomas, "shut your eyes, Mary."

Mary hid her face in her mamma's lap. A great deal of whispering and running about went on. "May I look yet," asked Mary, two or three times.

"Now," cried Thomas and Willie, both at once. Mary looked up, and saw at her side, a little table covered with green, on which were feeding about twenty pretty white sheep, and ten lambs; behind them was a sheep fold, a farm-

house with green trees about it, four cows, three horses, some pigs, two dogs and a puppy, a milk-maid, and a shepherd playing on a pipe.

“Oh, how *pretty*,” cried Mary.

“They are for you,” said little Willie. And Thomas whispered to her that Willie had saved all the money that anybody had given him for six months, to buy them. “Dear, kind, little Willie,” said Mary, almost crying as she kissed him. “Look, this shall be the farm-house, in the story of ‘The Little Milk-Maid,’ ” said she, “and this shall be Sally.”

“And here are Brindle, Dapple, Frisky, and Maggie,” said Willie, “and

all this, where the sheep are, shall be the field."

"Oh, and this shall be the little dog, Trusty," said Mary, "and we can make this bit of fold into a stile, and Sally can get over it, and we must pretend she has got a pail on her head."

"I will make you a little pail," said Thomas.

"Oh, how nice," cried Willie and Mary, both at once.

"Now look on the other side, Mary," said her mamma. On the other side Mary saw a box of wooden bricks, made for her by Thomas.

"Oh, thank you," cried Mary



have so often wished for bricks, I shall like so very much to build."

"Now turn round, dear Mary," said her papa. In the window was a stand of flowers; two large geraniums, a white and a scarlet, a myrtle, a camellia full of buds, and a heath; on a label, tied to the myrtle, was written, "For our dear little girl, from her papa and mamma." On a lower shelf were two pots of hyacinths and two of narcissi from Aunt Mary, and in the middle a fairy rose in full bloom from Chrissy.


Little Mary looked at the beautiful plants with delight; she kissed them, *and stroked* the green leaves with her

hands; then ran and threw her arms round the kind friends who had given them to her; then she looked rather grave, and said, "But I have got too many things."

"No, no," cried Thomas and Willie.

"Oh, yes, I have," answered she; "but we can all play with them, we can all build, and play at Sally, and you can help to water the plants."

"And all of us shall enjoy their beauty, you know, and the more because our dear little Mary takes care of them," said her mamma. "Now let us call in Susan."

Susan came smiling in from the kitchen, and was immediately 

upon by the children, who, after tying a handkerchief over her eyes, led her up to a chair, on which lay a dark but bright, blue merino gown, and a cap trimmed with cherry-coloured ribbons. When her eyes were uncovered, and she was told these were for her, her cheeks became as red as the ribbons with pleasure, and she thanked them all in her prettiest manner. Then they hung over her arm a green and lilac silk work-bag, that looked as if it was full of all sorts of useful things to give to her little assistant in the kitchen, and then she went away carrying her presents, for she said she *had not a minute to spare.*

James White now ran upstairs, and presently came down again, carrying a large brown paper parcel. They all gathered round him while he untied the string. When he had opened it, there appeared, to the great delight of everybody, a collection of new books; there were a great many children's books, beautifully bound in all manner of colours, red, green, orange, blue, with gilding and pretty ornaments; and most of them had pictures, and they seemed such nice stories. There were larger books too, which were not for the children; he had not forgotten any one. How much pleasure for winter evenings had James

White brought in his brown paper parcel! They could not help opening the books and beginning to read, but James White himself called them away by saying, "There are still a great many nice things in this room that we have heard nothing about; here is a whole box full."

"Oh, you must not touch that box," cried Mary, "those are grandmamma's presents."

"Then is grandmamma to wear this bright red handkerchief, and this black velvet cap?" asked James White.

"Oh, no," answered she, laughing, "those are for Robin; you know who

 *I mean.*"

“Yes, I know him,” said he, “does he still act the Robin?”

“Yes, and we know he will act it at grandmamma’s for us, so I hemmed this red handkerchief for his bright red breast, and Chrissy made this black velvet cap for his poll, as he calls it.”

“Well, certainly then this warm jacket and trousers and the peaked hat, lying on the chair, *cannot* be for grandmamma,” said James White, putting on the hat, which had a scarlet ribbon round it, with a bunch of bright holly-berries at one side.

This made them all laugh so much that it was a long time before any one

could speak ; at last Mary said, " Those are for a little Italian boy we know ; he promised to come here on Christmas morning, and he is to dine with Susan."

" And has he got a little sister that is to have these pretty dolls ?" said James White.

" No, he left a little sister at home in Italy, with his father and mother. He is all alone here ; but he is to go back next year with all the money he has ; then they will be so happy, he says. The dolls are for some little girls I know in the village."

Just then Oliver passed the window ~~bringing~~ in some logs, and Mary's

mamma called him in and gave him a nicely bound copy of "Robinson Crusoe," with which he was very much pleased, for he was very fond of reading in the evenings.

"And now," said Mary's mamma, "suppose you all go out and leave the dolls and different things at the cottages, like good fairies; but Oliver must take the arm-chairs to Mr. Dove."

"Who is Mr. Dove?" asked James White.

"He is our village carpenter, and you will like him very much."

"And he made the frame-work of these chairs," said Thomas, "and never



knew they were for himself and Goody Dove."

"Then mamma had them stuffed," said Mary, "and covered them."

"Is not this a pretty flower worked on the back?" said Willie. "We can take Reuben his trap, bat, and ball."

"Yes, and Jessie her doll," said Mary; "this is hers in the blue frock. But, mamma, we cannot go out yet; we have something more to do."

Just then mamma saw by her side, on a small table which Thomas had wheeled round, a beautiful little ship; it was made of boxwood. It had three *masts*, and every sail, rope, and yard,

were made correctly. It was covered by a glass shade, and it stood on a rug worked in shades of sea-green and white, to imitate the waves. Thomas took hold of her hand and asked her with a beaming face to accept it.


“Oh, it is beautiful,” she cried, “did you really make this for me, Thomas?”

“We all made it,” said he, “mamma cut out the sails and Willie hemmed them, and made the flag, and mamma made the sea that it stands upon, and gave the glass shade.”

“It is a large merchant ship, I see,” said she; and Mary began to sing a

verse out of her favourite "Oak-tree,"  
by Mary Howitt :—

" For she shall not be a man-of-war,  
Nor a pirate shall she be,  
But a noble Christian merchant ship,  
To sail upon the sea."

James White said it was famously made, and told Thomas he was a capital workman ; and Mary's mamma said that it should stand in the parlour window, and that it would be a pleasure to her whenever she looked at it. Just then she raised her head, and suddenly exclaimed, " Oh, how like ! thank you, my dear Chrissy, for such a precious gift. I know it is  from you." A curtain had been drawn

away that had covered one part of the wall, and there hung a picture of little Mary carrying a basket of flowers on her head. While every one stood looking at it, the little girl herself began to dance and jump about the room, clapping her hands and crying, "That was what we were doing when we shut ourselves in the room; and papa gave the pretty frame. But you don't know how like it is yet. Come, Chrissy! come and help me." And away they went together.

In a few minutes they came back, Mary carrying on her head a large flower-basket, exactly like that in the picture. It was made of open wire-work, which

was frosted all over with crystals so as to look like the trees with their coral and diamond branches. It was lined with bright green moss, which looked lovely with the shining frost-work. Round the edge of the basket was a wreath of ivy, and the dark leaves fell over the edge; within the ivy was a wreath of winter berries; the bright holly was most abundant: but there were also the smooth white snow-berries, the ivy-berries nearly black, the greenish white mistletoe, and a few red haws that the birds thought they might spare. Next came a gay wreath of flowers, notwithstanding the early winter, for there

was not a cottage-garden in the village that had not contributed some out of its warm sunny corners, when it was known that little Mary wanted them for her mamma. There were chrysanthemums of every colour, yellow, white, purple, and pink; laurustinus, and china roses. Then came a wreath of geranium leaves, and next to them a wreath of pure wintry-white flowers of the hellebore, which the country people call Christmas roses; these came from Mr. Dove's. Next to them, and in the centre of all, was a splendid bunch of scarlet geranium flowers, that Oliver had been cherishing in his window for a long time,

Little Mary walked straight up to her mamma, holding this beautiful basket on her head with one hand, and said, "Do you like it, dear mamma?"

"I do, indeed, like it, my little darling," said she, kissing the bright face under the basket, which Chrissy removed and held safe, to let the little girl throw her arms round her mamma's neck. "It is a worthy companion to the other beautiful presents I have had to-day."

Every one gathered round this lovely basket, and seemed hardly able to leave off admiring it, till Mary's mamma said, "Put it in the middle of the table, *Chrissy.*"

But the middle of the table was occupied. There stood on it a marble figure of an angel, with large wings folded behind, and hands crossed on the breast. It was a present to Chrissy from all; and as her sweet voice and beaming eyes thanked them, they felt that it was just the right present for her.

"Now let us go and be the good fairies," cried Willie.

"Oh, yes, so we will," said Mary, beginning to collect dolls, balls, frocks, and all manner of things. "Here's something we have forgotten: Bouncer! Bouncer!" A scratching and a short bark were heard at the door, and when



it was opened in he came, and received from his master's hands a new brass collar. As soon as it was fastened he gave himself a good shake and made it rattle very much, and then jumped up on Mary, as much as to say, "I am dressed ready to go out;" and they were soon ready too, and set off, all but Mary's mamma, who wished to stay at home.

When their walk was over, and they had dressed and all met in the little dining-room, they saw why she had not gone out with them. She had made the room look so beautiful! The lovely flower-basket was placed in the middle *of the* dinner-table; the angel on the

chimney-piece; and the picture of little Mary beside it. The ship was placed on one side of the window, and the stand of flowers on the other; the pretty work-basket on a table near; also the carrier's cart, bricks, tool-chest, and Mary's farm. The books had a little table all to themselves. The setting sun shone in at the window; the fire blazed, and crackled. Susan came in to wait in her new gown and cap; and everything looked as cheerful as the little party felt. The parlour was cleared for the evening's amusements, for after tea there was to be blind man's buff. They soon found that James White could romp as well


as talk, and they made such a noise, that at last, to quiet them a little, Mary's mamma sang to them, and sometimes all joined in chorus.

Just as they finished all together, an old Christmas carol that ended with—

“And all the bells in the earth did ring  
On Christmas-day in the morning,”—

a merry whistle took up the tune outside the door.

“Robin! Robin! I know it is,” cried Mary; and out she rushed followed by every one in the room, and soon returned tight clasped round his neck, while the most joyous welcomes sounded

 *through the room.*

Now there was a busy running backwards and forwards of little feet to wait on the newly arrived guest, who had walked twelve miles to come to them, he said, and who brought in some snow on his hat and cloak. He was soon comfortably seated in dry slippers in a warm corner, with a cup of hot coffee and a large slice of cake, which the children took care he should have, and he declared he would have walked *fifty* miles in the snow to be so received, and to find such a set of dear faces all together; and every one felt as if there really was nothing more in the world to wish for.

When tea was over, and Robin had been asked three times if he was *quite* rested, "blind man's buff" began. Who played the most pranks, whether Mary's papa, Robin, or James White, it was difficult to say. Everybody joined, Susan and all, and every one was caught and blinded. Willie was blind-man three times, and Mary twice. It was very difficult to catch Thomas, for he climbed over places so cleverly, and ran so fast; but he was caught at last. "Puss in the corner" followed, and then "Frog in the middle." When James White was Frog, and they were all dancing *round and singing* "Frog in the middle *and can't get out,*" he jumped over, but

they said that was not fair, that would never do ! he must crawl under ;” so he had to go in again ; but he managed to get through very soon. As for Robin, when he was in the middle, he made such a ridiculous face, so like a frog, that they all lost the strength in their hands with laughing, and he got out directly ; Willie was so little he crept under very soon. After this they had “ Hunt the ring ;” this is a nice game, not so riotous as “ Hunt the slipper.” You have a long string, on which you put a ring, and then tie the two ends together ; then all but one, who is in the middle, stand in a circle, and push the ring from one to the other, while the one in the middle tries to catch and stop

it, as it is quickly slipped from one to the other. "Magic music" came next. In this game one is sent out of the room while the rest fix on something which that one is to do. Then the music begins. When the one who is trying to find out what had been fixed on, is near doing it, the music is loud; when not nearly finding it out, the music is very low. When Robin was sent out they fixed that, when he came in, he should take up the tongs like a fiddle, and pretend to play a tune on them with the poker. It was a good while before he found out, but he tried so many funny things, while he was about *it, that they* were all quite tired with

laughing, so they played at "Cross purposes" to rest, and then cried "Forfeits." Then Robin's new black velvet cap and red handkerchief were presented, and he promised to act the Robin in the finest style next day. To finish the merry evening's games they had a dance, while Mary's mamma played to them, and then supper was ready.

What a pleasure it was to the children to sit up to supper! and then all to gather round the fire, while the log blazed, and a pleasant light and warmth seemed to fill the room.

After many a merry joke and laugh had gone round, Mary's papa asked for




the Christmas song. "We can have it again in the morning," said he; "but sing it now, before we part for the night." So Mary, with the two boys, joined at the end of each verse by her mamma and Chrissy, sang:—

## I.

Christmas is come with holly bough,  
Red berries peeping through the snow,  
That makes the bough droop heavy and low;  
And at his beard an icicle  
Hangs and shines, while the cold drops trickle.  
It is the only thing that's cold,  
Upon his face as merry as old.

## II.

Christmas is come; see the red fire blazing,  
It sends forth sounds with a joy that's amazing;  
And out of a coal some elf of the fire  
 *Blows a trumpet of smoke and seems never to tire.*

Glad tidings come with the merry sound  
Of the old year's circle rolling round.  
Good-bye, Gaffer year, we very well know  
You're off on a journey by night through the snow.

## III.

Glad tidings we hear! joy, joy, in all faces!  
We'll send Time to bed, or to run backward races.  
Peace, peace to the world, let the world be all love,  
Through Him, the bless'd Teacher, whose light  
    beams above.  
Young and old—children all—we are sister and  
    brother  
For His sweet lesson taught us to love one another.

The song seemed to have made every  
face look happier than even it did before.

“Do you remember, mamma,” said  
Mary, “once, when we were talking  
about birthdays, you said that Christmas-  
day was the happiest of all, for it was a  
*birthday* for all the world?”



